

This I Believe: Stuck in the Middle

They say that the older and younger siblings receive more love and care, and that the middle child will always be the odd one out. As Harold Coffin once said, “Envy is the art of counting the other fellow's blessings instead of your own.” Being a middle child, jealousy is inevitable. However, I have realized that being a middle child may be a blessing in disguise.

Often, I experience moments when I feel that my elder brother gets all the glory while my younger sister escapes discipline. When my brother achieves yet another leadership position, or once again scores outstanding results for his previous exam, my mother never compares us, but I do. For instance, when my sister whines and gets another unnecessary toy yet again, while I have to deliberate and consider carefully before making a purchase; when she does something wrong without getting punished, while I get my due punishment when I commit a minor mistake. No one notices the stark contrast, but I do. I really do.

For instance, throughout my entire primary school life, I was constantly referred to as “Kevan’s sister”. In Primary Five, when I was selected to give a speech at my brother’s graduation, I was overjoyed and practised hard for my speech. After giving my speech, I received an overwhelming round of applause, but I overheard people referring to me as “Kevan’s sister”. I was disheartened by the fact that even after making my mark, I was still labeled as “Kevan’s sister”. Sometimes, I wonder if anyone understands how it feels like to be constantly outshined by your brother, and I cannot help but be jealous of him.

Being in the middle is really the worst place to be in. I have a younger sibling who never fails to get me in trouble. As if that is not enough, I have an older sibling who bosses me around. In addition, to my parents, my older brother would always be special because he is their first-born, the beginning of a new family, and my younger sister would always be their little baby. Then, where do I stand?

If I find a way to be thankful for my troubles, then maybe they can become my blessings. Having a brother that constantly outshines me spurs me on to achieve greater heights. I feel that he is an exemplary role model for me to follow and his achievements are a motivation for me. Having a mischievous sister teaches me essential life lessons, for instance, tolerance. If I am able to tolerate her, why not everyone else?

There are reasons for terms like “Mummy’s Boy” and “Daddy’s Girl”. Every

time my parents tuck me in bed and kiss me good night, I know I'm a little of both and this is what makes me special. Siblings are part and parcel of a life-long learning process. I believe, being stuck in the middle may not be the worst thing after all.